

Amendments to the Claims:

The following listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

1. (Currently Amended) A fuel cell system, comprising:

a fuel cell;

a gas supply-discharge portion for supplying the fuel cell with a gas used in power generation conducted thereby or discharging an exhaust gas from the fuel cell; and
a controller that determines the presence/absence of a freeze among specific portions or components of the fuel cell system including the gas supply-discharge portion, the controller operating the gas supply-discharge portion at a time an operation for starting of the fuel cell is initiated, wherein the controller prohibits the start of the fuel cell system by stopping a supply ~~the supply~~ of hydrogen when a freeze is detected in the gas supply-discharge portion.

2. (Previously Presented) The fuel cell system according to claim 1, further comprising a temperature detector for detecting a temperature in at least one of the portions or components of the fuel cell system, wherein the controller determines the presence of a freeze if the temperature detected by the temperature detector is below a reference value.

3. (Previously Presented) The fuel cell system according to claim 1, further comprising a pressure detector for detecting a pressure at the gas supply-discharge portion, wherein the controller determines the presence/absence of a freeze on the basis of the pressure detected by the pressure detector.

4. (Previously Presented) The fuel cell system according to claim 3, wherein the controller further determines the presence of a freeze if the pressure detected by the pressure detector is out of a predetermined range.

5. (Previously Presented) The fuel cell system according to claim 3, further comprising an adjustment mechanism disposed in the gas supply-discharge portion to adjust the supplied or discharged amount of gas, wherein

the controller determines the presence/absence of a freeze on the basis of a change in the pressure detected by the pressure detector when operating the adjustment mechanism.

6. (Previously Presented) The fuel cell system according to claim 1, further comprising an electrically driven component for the supply or discharge of gas which is disposed in the gas supply-discharge portion, wherein

the controller determines the presence/absence of a freeze on the basis of a difference between a commanded rotational speed of the electrically driven component and the actual rotational speed of the electrically driven component.

7. (Previously Presented) The fuel cell system according to claim 1, further comprising an electrically driven component for the supply or discharge of gas which is disposed in the gas supply-discharge portion, wherein the controller determines the presence/absence of a freeze through a comparison between a target driven value of the electrically driven component that is indicated by a drive command corresponding to electric power supplied to the electrically-driven component and the actual driven value obtained during the operation of the electrically driven component.

8. (Previously Presented) The fuel cell system according to claim 1, further comprising a defroster for defrosting a frozen component or portion of the fuel cell system, wherein the controller permits, when it is determined that the gas supply-discharge portion is not frozen but another component or portion of the fuel cell system is frozen, the start of the fuel cell system, and controls the defroster to defrost the frozen component or portion using at

least one of an electric power and heat generated during the power generation by the fuel cell system.

9. (Original) The fuel cell system according to claim 1, further comprising a notifier for providing a user with at least of one of information regarding the determination made by the controller as to the presence/absence of a freeze in the fuel cell system and information selected in accordance with the result of the same determination.

10. (Original) The fuel cell system according to claim 9, wherein the notifier is formed by a display that provides the user with the information in the form of a message shown in a screen thereof.

11. (Original) The fuel cell system according to claim 9, wherein the notifier is adapted to provide the user with the information in the form of an audio indication.

12. (Previously Presented) The fuel cell system according to claim 1, wherein the gas supply-discharge portion is formed by a valve, and the controller determines the presence/absence of a freeze in the valve on the basis of the number of steps taken for opening the valve.

13. (Previously Presented) The fuel cell system according to claim 1, further comprising a defroster for defrosting a frozen component or portion of the fuel cell system and a battery,

wherein the controller permits, when it is determined that the gas supply-discharge portion is not frozen but another component or portion of the fuel cell system is frozen, the start of the fuel cell system, and controls the defroster to defrost the frozen component or portion using an electric power supplied from the battery.

14. (Currently Amended) A method for controlling a fuel cell system including a gas supply-discharge portion for supplying a fuel cell with a gas used in power generation by the fuel cell or discharging an exhaust gas from the fuel cell, the method comprising the steps of:

determining the presence/absence of a freeze among specific portions or components of the fuel cell system including the gas supply-discharge portion by operating the gas supply-discharge portion at a time an operation for starting of the fuel cell is initiated; ~~initiated~~; and

prohibiting the start of the fuel cell system by stopping the supply of hydrogen if a freeze is detected in at least one portion of the gas supply-discharge portion.

15. (Original) The method according to claim 14, wherein a temperature in at least one of the portions or components of the fuel cell system is detected, and the presence of a freeze is determined if the temperature detected is below a reference value.

16. (Original) The method according to claim 14, wherein a pressure at the gas supply-discharge portion is detected, and the presence/absence of a freeze is determined on the basis of the detected pressure.

17. (Currently Amended) A fuel cell system, comprising:
a fuel cell;
a gas supply-discharge portion for supplying the fuel cell with a gas used in power generation by the fuel cell or discharging an exhaust gas from the fuel cell; and
controlling means for determining the presence/absence of a freeze among specific portions or components of the fuel cell system including the gas supply-discharge portion by operating the gas supply-discharge portion at a time an operation for starting of the

fuel cell is initiated wherein the controlling means prohibits the start of the fuel cell system by shutting isolating the gas supply-discharge portion when a freeze is detected in the gas supply-discharge portion.

18. (Original) The fuel cell system according to claim 17, further comprising temperature detecting means for detecting a temperature in at least one of the portions or components of the fuel cell system,

wherein the controlling means determines the presence of a freeze if the temperature detected by the temperature detecting means is below a reference value.

19. (Original) The fuel cell system according to claim 17, further comprising a pressure detecting means for detecting a pressure at the gas supply-discharge portion,

wherein the controlling means determines the presence/absence of a freeze on the basis of the pressure detected by the pressure detecting means.

20. (Original) A motor-driven vehicle comprising the fuel cell system according to claim 1 as a power source.

21. (Currently Amended) The fuel cell system according to claim 17, wherein the controlling means prohibits the start of the fuel cell system by shutting the hydrogen supply valve stopping the supply of hydrogen when a freeze is detected in the gas supply-discharge portion.